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ABSTRACT

Previous research by W. Cross (1980) concluded that blacks have a multifaceted reference group orientation which utilizes both black and white anchor points dependent upon situational cues. To further delineate the relationship between the group and self identity and to determine if the relationship between these constructs differs for black male and female college students, 51 black (19 males, 32 females) college students completed the Katz and Braly Scale (rating the degree of favorability of 84 adjectives usually used to describe people, and selecting 5 which were most descriptive of themselves, black Americans, white Americans, and women and men); and the Tennessee Self Concept Test, a multidimensional measure yielding an overall self-concept score and 9 others: identity, acceptance, behavior and attitudes about one's physical, moral, personal, familial and social self, and self-criticism. An analysis of the results showed no relationship between the total self-concept score and the ratings of black and white Americans for either males or females. Group and self identity were unrelated for this sample of middle class, black college students. Females' ratings of males were positively correlated with self-concept and were a significant predictor of their total self-concept. Males' ratings of men were not correlated with self-concept. Future research will need to vary social class, age, geographic region, degree of interracial contact, and other social variables to adequatley assess for whom and under what circumstances group identity influences personal identity. (BL)

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Group and Self Identity: Rethinking an Unresolved Phenomenon

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Group and Self Identity: Rethinking an Unresolved Phenomenon

First, the status of research in the area of group and self identity was discussed. Then the favorability of racial and gender stereotypes and their relationship to self-concept was studied for 51 black college students. There was no relationship between the total self-concept score and the ratings of black and white Americans for either males or females. The females' ratings of males were positively correlated with self-concept and a significant predictor of their total self-concept while the males' ratings of men were not correlated with self-concept.

Group and Self Identity: Rethinking an Unresolved Phenomenon

Kardiner and Ovesey (1951), influenced by Lewin's (1948) theory on "self-hatred among Jews," hypothesized that black Americans suffered from inner-directed rage and self-hatred as the result of racial discrimination and a preference for the characteristics and traits of the white majority group. They assumed that racial and personal identity were strongly related. Since their work this relationship has been questioned (Clark, 1982b; Cross, 1980; Porter, 1971; Porter & Washington, 1979). This paper will first analyze the status of research in the area of group and self identity and then present data to further clarify this relationship.

Porter and Washington (1979) reviewed studies in the areas of black group identity and self-esteem and discussed the relationship between these two dimensions. They felt that the theoretical frameworks for explaining the personal identity of blacks generally assumed a reciprocal relationship between racial and personal identity. They identified four theoretical approaches to explain black personal identity. First, the social-evaluation theory proposed that blacks utilized other blacks as their reference group for social comparison and therefore were able to maintain positive self-images. Lower social class and segregated blacks would have higher self-esteem because of more contact with blacks than middle class and integrated blacks. Second, locus of control theory suggested that the relationship between high self-esteem and external control was normal and healthy for blacks (Gurin & Epps, 1975; Gurin, Gurin, Lao, & Beattie, 1969). Blaming the system was not merely inadequate justification for lack of effort

but instead it was a realistic assessment of the effects of racism in society. The third approach, the tangle of pathology, upheld by Moynihan (1965) and others (Clark, 1965; Rainwater, 1970; Schultz, 1969) focused on the inadequacies of the low income black family and its inability to foster positive self-images in its offspring. The last approach, supportive black subcommunity, was opposed to the tangle of pathology approach and instead proposed that lower class blacks were socialized into a positive black culture with good role models that accounted for the favorable self-image among lower class blacks. Porter and Washington concluded that all four approaches would predict that an increase in racial identity would affect personal identity, differing only on the magnitude of the effect. The locus of control perspective would predict a strong relationship while both the social-evaluation and supportive black subcommunity theories would predict moderate relationships between racial and personal identity. The tangle of pathology model would predict that racial identity can change faster than personal identity which is limited by changes in the social structure. They concluded that in spite of measurement problems in many studies supporting these four paradigms, racial and personal identity are positively related.

Cross (1980) reviewed 161 studies of black identity conducted from 1939 thru 1977 that measured either personal identity, reference group orientation (racial identity) or both. There were 13 studies measuring both personal and racial identity but only 4 published (Butts, 1963; McAdoo, 1978; Porter, 1971; Ward & Braun, 1972), and the remaining studies were dissertations. Cross (1980) found that racial and personal identity were

related in only one of the studies reviewed (Ward & Braun, 1972). He discredited this study because of methodological flaws and concluded that "the link between doll studies and estimates of self-esteem turns out to be a myth" (p. 30). Cross proposed that blacks have a dual reference group orientation (both black and white). The out-group orientation of blacks reflected the degree to which they internalized white views and not self-rejection. The enhancement of in-group orientation would serve to increase the black's collective consciousness and political-cultural values but not one's personal identity. Reference group orientation was affected by the "Black Movement" and not self-esteem that was adequate prior to the movement. Cross (1978) explained the Negro-to-black conversion experience that took place during the Black Movement and concluded that this experience "radically modified the values, ideologies, reference group orientation and priorities of black people, but did not alter their basic personality and/or self-concept" (p. 26).

Cross (1980) and Porter and Washington (1979) reviewed many of the same studies but arrived at different conclusions. Consequently, the issue of how personal and self-identity still prevails. Since 1978, several other studies have investigated the relationship between group and self-identity. Rosenberg (1979) and Clark (1982b) studied racial group identity and self-esteem in school-age children and found no relationship between these two constructs. Recent findings for college students have differed. Clark (1982c) studied social stereotypes and self-concept in black and white college students and found that the black students' ratings of their own race were positively correlated with their global self-concept; however,

the self-concept scores (global and specific) were not significant predictors of their own-race ratings. Knowing the black students' self-concept level would not allow one to make predictions about their racial group identity or vice versa. Similar findings were obtained for a representative sample of adult black Americans. Clark (1982a) studied racial group and personal identity of 2107 black respondents from the National Survey of Black Americans ranging in age from 18 to 101. The concepts measured were self-esteem (personal identity) and racial stereotypes (group identity). There was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and racial stereotype for the total population; however, racial stereotype accounted for only 3% of the variation in the self-esteem scores. Because no predictive relationship existed between these two variables, Clark concluded that their relationship could not be understood without integrating information about sex, age, income, educational level, and other social and personality variables.

The findings from these latter studies are inconclusive. The results for black college students and adults tend to support the conclusions of Porter and Washington (1979) that group and self-identity are related. However, one must be concerned about the insignificant predictive relationship between these variables. There appears to be no relationship between group and self-identity for black children of school age. In short, there is still no support for previous theories and studies that assumed black out-group reference meant negative self-evaluations. Instead, it is more reasonable to combine some of the conclusions from both Cross (1980) and Porter and Washington (1979) which are not necessarily contradictory. It

seems that for some blacks there may be a relationship between group and self-identity; however, its existence is dependent upon characteristics of the blacks studied and the manner in which group identity is operationalized. Studies have conceptualized group identity as racial preference (Ward & Braun, 1972), racial attitude (Clark, 1982b; McAdoo, 1978), skin color perception (Butts, 1963), stereotypes (Clark, 1982a, 1982c), system blame and collective consciousness (Gurin & Epps, 1975). Although these constructs are related, they are not the same. Cross' (1980) conclusion that blacks have a multi-faceted reference group orientation which can utilize both black and white anchor points dependent upon situational cues appears to be cogent. Porter and Washington (1979) even conclude that factors such as socioeconomic level, interracial contact and personality may mediate the effects of group identity on self-image. They go further to suggest that researchers have not adequately studied personal and group identity and failed to establish either the theoretical relationship between these concepts or the effect of social variables on this relationship. They suggest that future research should investigate group and self-identity and the social structure "attending to specific situational and personal contexts in which these factors operate" (p. 70). These suggestions are supportive of those presented by Cross (1980).

In an attempt to further delineate the relationship between group and self-identity, data from the Clark (1982c) study on social stereotypes and self-concept was reanalyzed to determine if the relationship between these constructs differed for black male and female college students.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 51 black (19 males, 32 females) college students attending a predominantly black school in the Southeast. The mean age was 19 years 8 months. The black students were middle-class as assessed by the Hollingshead Index of Social Position (Hollingshead, 1957). They were participants in an Introduction to Psychology subject pool at their university.

Procedure

Subjects were administered the Katz and Braly Scale (1933) in a group session by a same-race experimenter. They were instructed to read through the list of 84 adjectives and select five that were most descriptive of themselves. They repeated this process and chose five adjectives which best described black Americans, white Americans, women and men, in this order. They were then instructed to read through the 84 adjectives and rate each one on its degree of favorability, as it is normally used to describe people. They responded by using a Likert Scale from 5(favorable) to 1(unfavorable). They were then administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Test (Fitts, 1965). The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) is a multidimensional measure which yields 10 different scores. The total P score is used most frequently as a general level of self-concept. However, it is possible to obtain scores on one's basic description of self (identity), general level of satisfaction (acceptance), actions (behavior), and attitudes about one's physical, moral, personal, family, and social selves. The last dimension measured is self-criticism; high scores indicate a normal openness for self-criticism and low scores indicate defensiveness.

Results

Favorability

Favorability scores for the 84 adjectives of the Katz and Braly scale were calculated with data from the total sample. These scores were then used to compute the mean favorability score of the five adjectives chosen by each subject to describe self and the racial and gender groups. A 2(sex) x 5(groups rated) ANOVA with repeated measures on the five group favorability scores was calculated. A significant groups rated effect was found, $F(4, 196) = 30.52$, $p < .001$. Table 1 shows the mean favorability scores of males and females for the self, and group ratings. The self ratings were higher than all of the group ratings. The favorability rating for women ($\bar{X} = 3.68$) was higher than the ratings for black Americans ($\bar{X} = 3.49$), white Americans ($\bar{X} = 2.94$), and men ($\bar{X} = 3.18$). Black Americans were rated more favorably than white Americans who received the least favorable ratings; however, these means were not significantly different from each other.

Insert Table 1 about here

Self-Concept and Stereotypes

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlations for self, and the racial and gender group ratings, together with the 10 scores obtained from the TSCS. This is presented separately for the male and female subjects.

Insert Table 2 about here

There were no significant correlations between the self-ratings of the males and females and the favorability scores for both black and white

Americans. The self ratings of the females were significantly related to their ratings of women. It appears that the self ratings of the males were independent of their ratings of both racial and gender groups.

When looking at the correlations between the favorability scores and the TSCS scores, some interesting trends are seen. The self ratings of the females were not correlated with any of the dimensions of the TSCS, while the self ratings of the males were correlated with 5 TSCS scores: total P, acceptance, behavior, physical, and personal selves. Male students' favorability ratings of their own race were correlated with 2 of the 10 TSCS scores: acceptance and personal self, while the females' favorability ratings of their own race were correlated with identity and social selves. Male students' favorability ratings of white Americans were correlated with social self, while the female students' ratings of blacks were correlated positively with acceptance and physical self. There was no relationship between the total self-concept score and the ratings of black and white Americans for either males or females.

Males and females differed more on the relationship between gender stereotypes and the TSCS than racial stereotypes and the TSCS. The favorability ratings of women were not correlated with any of the 10 TSCS scores for either the male or female students. The females' favorability ratings of males, however, were positively correlated with 8 of the 10 TSCS scores, while males' ratings of men were not correlated with any of the TSCS scores.

Separate stepwise multiple regression coefficients were calculated for each sex with the favorability scores for the racial and gender groups as predictor variables and the total self-concept score as the criterion

variable. The female students' rating of women was the only significant predictor of total self-concept, $F(1, 30) = 5.65$, $p < .025$. The ratings accounted for 16% of the variation in their self-concept scores ($r = .40$). There were no significant predictors for the males.

Discussion

The relationship between the self ratings and the TSCS indicated that the self ratings of the males were consistent with their self-concepts, but this was not true for the female students. In the original study (Clark, 1982c), when sex was not a variable in the correlational analysis, the results were that blacks were inconsistent in their self-report of self-concept. There was no relationship between self ratings and TSCS scores for the total black population. However, the reanalysis has revealed that the black females are the ones with the inconsistent self-concepts and not the black males. Originally, Clark (1982c) suggested that social desirability may have accounted for the inconsistency found among the black students; however, in light of these recent findings, that statement must be limited to black females.

Males and females rated themselves more favorably than they rated the racial and gender groups. Black Americans were rated more favorably than white Americans. Over the years white and black students have increasingly adhered to more favorable stereotypes of black Americans (Clark & Pearson, 1982; Karlins, Coffman, & Walters, 1969), a trend which is supported by the present data. Male students tend to give slightly more favorable overall ratings than females.

Personal identity (self-concept) was not related to group identity (stereotypes). The racial group ratings were not related to the total self-concept of either male or female students; however, a few self-concept dimensions were related to the group ratings. The acceptance and personal dimensions of the TSCS were related to the male subjects' ratings of black Americans and the social dimension was related to their ratings of white Americans. The identity and social dimensions were related to the ratings of black Americnas and the acceptance and physical dimensions to the ratings of white Americans for female subjects. The lack of relationship between total self-concept and ratings of black Americans is a very significant finding. When males and females were combined in the original study (Clark, 1982c), there was a significant correlation between these variables. When the data are analyzed by sex, the relationship disappears. The disappearance of a once significant relationship supports the contention by Porter and Washington (1979) that the relationship between personal and self identity must be studied in the context of the social structure. Grouping blacks together as a homogeneous group may hinder our understanding of these concepts. These findings also support the basic conclusion of Cross (1980) that group and self-identity are not related. In addition, the own-race ratings were not significant predictors for either males or females which further supports the notion that the "black self-hatred doctrine" is unwarranted.

There have been several interpretations for the lack of a significant relationship between group and self-identity for black Americans. Originally, Porter (1971) suggested that social class level was important in understanding group and self-identity. She believed that middle-class blacks would

have more positive self-concepts and lower racial group identity than lower-class blacks. Given this interpretation, one would expect the relationship between group and self-identity to be stronger for lower-class blacks. This theoretical approach is somewhat supported by the present results showing no relationship for middle-class college students. However, it is not known if lower-class blacks would show a similar pattern.

Rosenberg (1979) proposed that negative group attitudes along with disidentification with that group would serve to enhance instead of lower personal identity. He defined disidentification as "the feeling that the group is not an integral part of the self, that the fate of the group and of the self are separate and distinct; the group is not introjected" (p. 15). This concept is closely related to "common fate" and "collective consciousness." It was believed that blacks who held negative racial group attitudes, but disidentified, protected their self-concept which would be more positive than blacks who held negative group attitudes and identified with blacks. This hypothesis assumed that there was a negative relationship between group and self-identity which actually did not exist in the Rosenberg study. In addition, Clark (1982b) found no difference in the self-esteem level of those black children who held both negative racial attitudes along with out-group preferences and those with positive racial attitudes and in-group preferences. Rosenberg's hypothesis is yet to be supported by strong empirical data.

Cross (1980) took the position that the Black Pride Movement during the latter 1960s altered racial group attitudes but did not change personal identity of black Americans. Personal identity (self-concept) of blacks was always adequate, even prior to the Black Movement. As Gordon (1976) and

others (Baldwin, 1979) pointed out the myth of low self-concept in blacks resulted from serious methodological errors which most frequently included the measurement of group identity instead of personal identity. Cross reasoned that because of the blacks' dual reference group orientation, enhancement of personal identity could be obtained by either in- or out-group orientation. Knowing the group identity of blacks "will not inform us about the nature of his personal identity; however, it gives us considerable insight into the person's value system, political and cultural stance" (p. 36).

The findings for gender group identity and personal identity parallel those for racial group and personal identity. There was no relationship between self-concept and own-gender stereotypes. The black males' self-concept is totally unrelated to his rating of either men or women. Regardless of self-concept, males rated women more favorably than men. Knowing how black females rate women gives no clue to their overall self-concept. These findings illustrate the complexity of the self-concept and suggest that the immediate sociocultural environment is more important in shaping self-concept than just being a member of a racial or gender group.

An interesting finding in the present study was the positive correlation between the black females' self-concept and their ratings of men. One could predict the females' level of self-concept by knowing only how they felt about men. This finding illustrates the higher status of men in our society. The implications are that black women can not devalue men and maintain a positive self-concept. Male/female interactions must be very essential to the black female's self-concept.

In summary, group and self-identity are unrelated for middle-class black college students. The attitudes that black students have about their own-race and -gender groups are virtually independent of their personal identity. Generalizations from the present study are limited by the small sample size, social class level, and the racial composition of the college attended by these black students. Future research will need to vary social class, age, geographic region, degree of interracial contact, and other social variables to adequately assess for whom and under what circumstances group identity influences personal identity, if ever. There is also a need to view group identity as a multidimensional concept that includes identification, preferences, attitudes, collective consciousness, system blame and common fate. This would allow one to discuss not only the relationship between group and self-identity but in addition the specific dimensions of group identity. After more than 40 years and over 150 studies measuring some aspect of group and self-identity in black Americans, a clear understanding is yet to be reached.

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Table 1

Mean Favorability Ratings for Self, Racial and Gender Groups

	Male	Female	Total
Self	4.08	4.01	4.04
Black American	3.62	3.49	3.54
White American	3.01	2.94	2.97
Women	3.61	3.72	3.68
Men	3.40	3.18	3.26
Total	3.54	3.47	
N	19	32	

Table 2

Correlations for Self-concept and Favorability Scores, Male and Female Subjects

	Mean Favorability Scores									
	Self		Black		White		Women		Men	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Self Favorability	1.00	1.00	.30	.22	06	.02	.06	.58***	.04	.12
Tennessee Self Concept										
P Score	.45*	.05	.30	.29	.31	.24	.14	.06	.13	.40**
Identity	.35	.10	-.01	.40**	.33	.13	-.12	.06	.18	.39**
Acceptance	.39*	.03	.44*	.12	.20	.33*	.31	.04	.07	.31*
Behavior	.43*	-.01	.23	.26	.32	.12	.04	.05	.13	.33*
Physical	.50**	.17	.31	.19	.07	.33*	.22	.11	.09	.31*
Moral	.34	.14	.02	.21	.24	.15	-.07	.14	.11	.35*
Personal	.50**	.08	.54**	.21	.12	.11	.02	-.06	.05	.28
Family	.24	.04	.27	.23	.34	.12	.19	.01	.08	.38*
Social	.18	-.20	.05	.32*	.52**	.15	.16	.16	.23	.37*
Criticism	-.12	-.12	-.17	.19	.03	-.22	.07	.12	.36	.12

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001